

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

MY DEAR FELLOW-WORKERS,—

I see in the *May Parents' Review* that Mrs. Firth is going to lecture on "Ruskin on Education," and I thought it would be interesting to send you an exact copy (from the original) of a letter written by Ruskin in answer to a mother's questions.

E. ROWLAND BROWN.

BRANTWOOD,
CONISTON.

MY DEAR ———

No,—I've never written a pamphlet on nurseries; first because I never write about anything except what I know more of than most other people:—secondly, because I think nothing much matters in a nursery—except the mother—the nurse and the air. So far as I have any notion or guess in the matter myself—beyond the perfection of those three elements, I should say, the rougher and plainer everything the better—no lace to cradle or cap—hardest possible bed and simplest possible food according to age—and floor and walls of the cleanablest.

All education to beauty is first—in the beauty of gentle human faces around a child—secondly, in the fields—fields meaning "grass—water—beasts—flowers, and sky."

Without these—no man can be educated humanly. He may be made a calculating machine—a walking dictionary—a painter of dead bodies—a twangler on keys or catgut—or a discoverer of new forms of worms in mud. But a properly so-called human being—never.

Pictures are *I believe* of no use whatever by themselves. If a child has other things right; round it, and given to it—its garden—its cat—and its windows to the sky and stars, then, in time, pictures of flowers—and beasts—and things in Heaven, and heavenly earth, may be useful to it. But see

first that its realities are heavenly. I have sent you a little book of which I keep a stock by me for presents to nice girls:

Faithfully yours,

J. RUSKIN.

DEAR EDITOR,

Those of your readers who subscribed to give Miss Lanphier a present, in token of our appreciation of her labours as Editor of *L'Umile Pianta* and Secretary of our Association, will be glad to know that we were able to send several books, which we ascertained that she wanted. A letter was also sent, on behalf of members, to convey our hearty thanks to Miss Lanphier, and our regret on her resignation.

Yours sincerely,

EVELYN M. FLOWER.

June 12th.

MY DEAR FELLOW-STUDENTS,

I scarcely know how to thank you all for the beautiful books you have so kindly sent me. I should have written before, but have been waiting for this issue of our Magazine.

I most thoroughly appreciate your kindness, and shall always value the books. I only wish my work had been more worthy of such recognition.

If what little I have been able to do for our Association should ultimately prove to be the foundation of something really practical and useful I shall feel most gratified, and far more than repaid for any work I may have done.

I am very glad to know that the work is now in the hands of those who are more fitted to carry it on than I ever was.

Wishing you all very happy holidays, and again thanking you most heartily for your kind thought,

I remain,

Yours sincerely,

EMILY LANPHIER.

56, Claverton Street,
London, S.W.

SCALE HOW,
AMBLESIDE.

DEAR EDITOR AND MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION,—

Since January life at the House of Education has been as busy as ever. At the beginning of the year the Juniors of last year stepped into their new position as Seniors with a sigh of regret for their lost fellow-students. They all hope that they have sustained this honourable position with due dignity, but as the writer is herself a Senior it would be impertinence on her part to offer an opinion. Every ex-student of last year speaks of her "Heimweh," for Ambleside and Scale How, and none of us wonder, for the work becomes more and more interesting and engrossing, and the second year one feels much more in the swing of everything, after a year of work has swept away all the cobwebs, and twelve months of handicraft work has made one realize what it is really to possess fingers. There was very little skating this year—only a few adventurous spirits who had the energy to hit the iron while it was hot, or in words more suited to the chilly occasion, to produce their rusty skates from every imaginable and unimaginable corner, had a few hours of that pastime on Lily Tarn, one bright frosty afternoon. But for the first time many of us enjoyed the delights of whizzing down a snowy slope—not on a tin tray, but on a *bona-fide* toboggan. No one who has not experienced it can imagine the charm of the sensation of skimming down the snow with bated breath even though you know that there is a soaking reception for you at the bottom of the hill.

When the spring came the students awoke from their comparative, only very comparative, hibernation, and "How doth the little busy bee, improve each shining hour," might have been said of each one while they tried to keep pace with all the flowers and twigs there were to find and paint in Nature Note-Books, when everything in Nature awoke with a sleepy shudder from its winter inertia.

We have had many and varied entertainments since January. The first was given soon after our return by the Seniors to initiate the Juniors, and was voted a very amusing one. After that, the Seniors handed over the sole managership and

lessee-ship of the Scale How Theatre, to the Juniors, and resigned themselves to being an appreciative audience. The Juniors have done most nobly, and have shown great power of organisation and a very keen sense of humour in the charming little displays they have arranged—which have included Charades, Tableaux, Fancy Dress Balls, A Display of Fireworks in honour of the relief of Ladysmith, and, what was quite novel, Sports, which were held last Saturday on the lawn. Among the entries were A Poet's Tournament, Washing Competition, Obstacle Race, etc., etc.

We have also had five Literary Evenings since January, which have included three on Shakespeare's plays, and a most interesting paper on Victor Hugo and his works, which was read by Miss Hammond, and a paper on Matthew Arnold read by Miss Kerr.

The most delightful of these evenings was, perhaps, that on which *Midsummer Night's Dream* was used, the little play of "Pyramus and Thisbe" being acted with very simple accessories.

Pyramus (Miss Devonshire) was splendidly acted. One saw the uncouth rustic's attempts at tragedy-acting with irresistible laughter: the lion and his roar was most realistic too (I wish I could describe the make-up, of a fur mat, painted brown paper mask, etc.). Then the wall, a tall lady with an imposing façade of brown paper marked so as to distinctly resemble masonry, and whose parted fingers formed a convenient clink for the lovers, was much admired. I have described this a little fully, thinking it might amuse the pupils of some ex-student to play it in the same way: the effect is so quaint.

With best wishes from

THE STUDENTS.